

10. AN AMENDMENT TO BE OFFERED BY REPRESENTATIVE
Bilirakis OF Florida, OR His
DESIGNEE, DEBATABLE FOR 10 MINUTES:

5
Revised

**AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1538, AS REPORTED
OFFERED BY MR. BILIRAKIS OF FLORIDA**

After section 101, insert the following new section
(and conform the table of contents accordingly):

**1 SEC. 102. ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF DE-
2 FENSE-WIDE OMBUDSMAN OFFICE.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Defense
4 shall establish a Department of Defense-wide Ombudsman
5 Office (in this section referred to as the “Ombudsman Of-
6 fice”) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

7 (b) FUNCTIONS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The functions of the Om-
9 budsman Office are to provide policy guidance to,
10 and oversight of, the ombudsman offices in the mili-
11 tary departments.

12 (2) POLICY GUIDANCE.—The Ombudsman Of-
13 fice shall develop policy guidance with respect to the
14 following:

15 (A) Providing assistance to and answering
16 questions from recovering service members and
17 their families regarding—

18 (i) administrative processes, financial
19 matters, and non-military related services

1 available to the members and their families
2 throughout the member's evaluation, treat-
3 ment, and recovery;

4 (ii) transfer to the care of the Vet-
5 erans Administration; and

6 (iii) support services available upon
7 the member's return home.

8 (B) Accountability standards, including—

9 (i) creating and maintaining case files
10 for individual specific questions received,
11 and initiating inquiries and tracking re-
12 sponses for all such questions;

13 (ii) setting standards for timeliness of
14 responses; and

15 (iii) setting standards for account-
16 ability to recovering service members and
17 their families, including requirements for
18 daily updates to the members and their
19 families about steps being taken to allevi-
20 ate problems and concerns until problems
21 are addressed

22 (c) STATUS REPORTS.—The ombudsman office in
23 each military department shall submit status reports of
24 actions taken to address individual concerns to the Om-

1 budsman Office, at such times as the Ombudsman Office
2 considers appropriate.

3 (d) RESPONSES FROM OTHER OFFICES.—The Sec-
4 retary of Defense shall ensure that all other offices within
5 the Department of Defense and the military departments
6 respond in a timely manner to resolve questions and re-
7 quests from the Ombudsman Office on behalf of recov-
8 ering service members and their families, including offices
9 responsible for medical matters (including medical hold-
10 over processes), financial and accounting matters, legal
11 matters, human resources matters, reserve component
12 matters, installation and management matters, and phys-
13 ical disability matters.

14 (e) STAFF OF THE OFFICE.—The staff of the Om-
15 budsman Office shall include representatives from each
16 military department, including persons with experience in
17 medical holdover processes and other medical matters.